

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01

INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-20 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06

SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-02 INT-05 AGRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 879

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

UNCLAS TUNIS 3061

E.O.11652: NA

TAGS: ECON PGOV TS LY

SUBJ: MIXED TUNISIAN-LIBYAN COMMISSION DISCUSSES ECONOMIC

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF TUNISIAN AND LIBYAN GOVERNMENTS MET IN TUNIS APRIL 21-25 TO HOLD FIRST MEETING OF JOINT WORKING GROUP ON INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED FOLLOWING MEETING OF TUNISIAN-LIBYAN JOINT COMMISSION LAST OCTOBER. LIBYAN DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE ABOUBAKER CHERIF. TUNISIAN DELEGATION WAS LED BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, MINES & ENERGY RACHID SFAR. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS DESCRIBED AS FURTHERING GOALS SET IN OCTOBER MEETING AND INCREASING BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN FIELDS OF TRADE AND PRODUCTION.

2. AGREEMENT ON FOUR MAJOR INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS WAS REACHED, WHICH CHERIF DESCRIBED AS SUPPORTIVE OF GOALS OF "INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTARITY AND ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY." SFAR LAUDED AGREEMENT AS ESTABLISHING "SOLID PLATFORM" FOR CLEHER BILATERAL COOPERATION. PROJECTS AGREED UPON ARE (A) LEAD AND ZINC SMELTER (EXPANSION OF EXISTING
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PLANT IN INDUSTRIAL SUBURB OF MEGRINE); (B) EXPANSION OF FLURITE FACTORY IN GABES AND TUNISIAN PARTICIPATION IN ESTABLISHMENT OF ALUMINUM PLANT IN LIBYA; (C) ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PACKING PAPER FACTORY; AND (D) ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW SHOE FACTORY USING TUNISIAN AND LIBYAN RAW MATERIALS. FACTORY'S PRODUCTION WILL BE MARKETED IN BOTH COUNTRIES. AGREEMENT ALSO NOTED POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE COOPERATION IN

OTHER FIELDS--READY-TO-WEAR CLOTHING, TEXTILE SPINNING,
MECHANICAL INDUSTRIES, FERTILIZERS AND PTRO-CHEMICALS.

3. CHERIF MET WITH PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA DURING VISIT
AND ALSO HELD TALKS WITH MINISTER OF COMMERCE M'BARAK
WHICH ACCORDING TO PRESS DEALTH WITH EXPASION OF TUNISIAN
EXPORTS TO LIBYA.

4. NO INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED AS TO SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS--
FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE--MADE BY EITHER COUNTRY, OR WHEN
EXPANSION/CONSTRUCTIONPROJECTS WILL ACTUALLY BE UNDERTAKEN.
WHATEVER MAY BE PRICE TAG, AGREEMENT APPEARS TO BE POLITICALLY
AS WELL AS ECONOMICALLY SIGNIFICANT. ALTHOUGH CERTAIN
MUTUAL SUSPICIONS MAY STILL REMAIN, AGREEMENT REFLECTS THE
APPARENT INTENT OF BOTH TUNISIA AND LIBYA TO KEEP UP THE
PACE OF IMPROVING RELATIONS BEGUN LAST SUMMER.
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